
A Lab/Remix

Aim to Misbehave: Privileges & Allies in Media Creation

Journalist Working Lab at SRCCON

<http://bit.ly/srccon-ally>

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How we are working today?

- Introduction (330 minutes)
- Lab time (60 minutes)
- Debrief (30 minutes)

Who am I?

Software Consultant working with data projects in Latin America

Member of the Board of Directors of Stumptown Syndicate, non-profit creating positive social change by supporting resilient, inclusive tech communities

Internet Freedom Festival Lead Facilitator

Immigrant in USA / Woman of Color / ESL



Gabriela Rodriguez Berón

Who am I?

Far Rock Native , Guyanese Child

Editor , Mozilla Network

Editor At Large , Coral Project

Media Critic and Internet Prognosticator



Sydette Harry

“Aim to Misbehave”



(a scene from the movie Serenity , where Malcolm Reynolds monologues on why the Universe needs to know about a government experiment whose results were hidden)

What is an ally? Some terminology first:

Privilege: an unearned advantage given by society to some people and not others

Oppression: systemic, pervasive inequality that is present throughout society, that benefits people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges



Privilege and Oppression operate in multiple ways

Depending on the situation, you may have some unearned societal advantages if you are:

Ethnic majority

Male

Cisgender (more later)

Straight

Education

Not disabled

A documented resident or
citizen

Speak certain language(s)

Specific ages

Certain height/size/shape

Not a mother

Not a caregiver

Educated

Technically experienced

Wealthy

From an upper class family

High caste

Name recognition

And many more...

What is an ally? Some terminology first:

Target: someone who suffers from oppression (also called "a member of a marginalized group")

Ally: a member of a social group that enjoys some privilege that is **working to end oppression** and **understand their own privilege**



Why we need to act as allies in life and in our work.

Allies have more power, influence, access to resources associated with their privileges

Allies may be in the majority

The work we do as journalists, coders, and media makers influences how the oppressed are treated, given access and valued

This Lab is an attempt to begin actively and methodically working on how to do our journalism better



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How Media Works as part of Systemic Oppression

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stories, TV, news coverage, and legal system stereotyping Black people as criminals, that benefits non-Black people and harms Black people (anti-black racism)

Privilege: You're not black. The ability to walk into a convenience store and have the owner assume you are there to buy things and not steal them, survive contact with police, have greater wealth etc



Barriers to Allyship that occurs in Journalism

Paradox of Tolerance

“The **paradox of tolerance** arises when a **tolerant** person holds antagonistic views towards *intolerance*, and hence is intolerant of it. The tolerant individual would then be by definition intolerant of intolerance. In other words, refusing to tolerate intolerance is itself intolerance.” (wikipedia)

Tone Policing

When people speak up in support of oppressed groups, it makes people in the dominant group feel guilty and sad

A common response is to ask the people speaking up to not hurt the feelings of the dominant group

Often this uses the word "angry" and especially "tone"

Rules Lawyering



What if I make a mistake?

Apologize, correct yourself,
and move on.

Terminology: gender

Cis: your gender is the same as the gender that was assigned to you at birth

Trans: your gender is different than the gender that was assigned to you at birth

Non-binary or genderqueer: "male" or "female" doesn't describe your gender accurately

Do not use:

Girls for women 18 years of age and over

Guys for groups that are not all men - people disagree on gender of "guys" so just avoid it

Ladies - associated with "proper" (i.e., subservient) behavior

Females for humans - used for animals and plants too, so it is dehumanizing

Transsexual - not inclusive of all trans people

People with [BODY PART or CHROMOSOME] instead of "men" or "women"

Exception: members of any marginalized group can agree to call themselves whatever they want (outsiders should not assume they can use the same terms)

Why no warning about "boys"
or "males"?

Why no warning about "boys"
or "males"?

**We already know not to use "boys"
and it is hard to dehumanize men**

Terminology: sexuality

Straight for women attracted primarily to men or men attracted primarily to women

Gay for men or women attracted primarily to people of the same gender as themselves

Lesbian for women attracted primarily to women

Bisexual or **pansexual** for people attracted to people of any gender (debate on-going)

Asexual for people with little or no sexual attraction to people of any gender

Queer is a useful catch-all term for people who don't fit easily into "straight cis woman" or "straight cis man" (debate on going on whether that can be used for people who do not self identify)

Discussion guidelines for race and ethnic groups

Use the term(s) for each ethnic group or race that the majority of that group prefers that outsiders use

Avoid abbreviations - just say or write the full name

Don't make generalizations or assumptions about food, jobs, religion, citizenship, immigration status, languages, hobbies, etc. based on race

Distinguish between nationality and descent

People of color, white, Black, Latina/Latino/Latinx, Asian, Asian & Pacific Islander (API), south Asian, east Asian

Use specific tribe name if possible, otherwise:

- Native Americans for indigenous peoples of mainland U.S.

- First Nations for indigenous peoples of Canada

- Native Hawaiians for indigenous peoples of Hawaii

- Alaskan Natives for indigenous peoples of Alaska



Avoid The Whistles

Dog whistles: dogs can hear them but people can't

Don't use "dog whistle" terms to refer to an ethnic group indirectly - e.g., "ethnic" or "urban"

If uncertain about term to use to refer to a specific ethnic group, **ask!**



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Discussion guidelines for disability

Use **abled person**, **disabled person**, or **person with disabilities**

Don't use names of specific disabilities as metaphors or similes to indicate badness (**deaf**, **blind**, etc.)

Don't use at all: **lame**, **dumb**, **stupid**, **crazy**, **retard**, etc

Only use respectfully in cases of self-disclosure: **ADD/ADHD**, **autism spectrum**, **schizophrenic**, **bipolar**...

Instead use "**foolish**," "**thoughtless**," or "**inconsiderate**"

Or a specific adjective like "**crowded**," "**disorganized**," or "**annoying**"

It's fine to use figures of speech like "see what I mean" or "I hear you"

Speak respectfully about religious or spiritual beliefs (but you don't need to be respectful of bigotry or intolerance)

Don't use stereotypes about people with working class jobs (e.g. janitor), members of a caste, adults of particular ages, family role (mother, grandparent, etc.)

Treat caregivers of all sorts respectfully, including mother

While you're trying to help one group, don't be:

sexist
homophobic
transphobic
racist
ableist
classist
ageist
body-shaming
and don't describe people as sexually
undesirable, unattractive, etc.



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Lab Work

- We go through an example of deconstructing a story
- Divide in groups with a topic each
- Each group choose a story or topic to remix
- Report back

First let's do an example.

White veteran charged with murder of black man as hate crime

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/white-veteran-charged-with-murder-of-black-man-as-hate-crime/>

- **Who is centered in the story?**
 - “A white Army veteran [accused of randomly killing a black man on the streets of New York](#) by stabbing him with a sword was charged Thursday with murder as a hate crime.”
- **What data is needed to better contextualize the inequalities of this topic?**
- **What are the problems of current coverage of this topic?**
- **What obstacles do you face in the newsroom to active allyship?**

Things to pay attention to

- Who is speaking most in your group?
- Is someone having difficulty being heard?
- Are there patterns related to gender, race, age, or anything else?
- How do these discussions compare to ones you have in other contexts?

Follow your discomfort: if something makes you feel bad, find out more and understand why before reacting

MEDIA REMIX

- Divide in groups with 5 people each
 - Preferably people you do not know
- Each group choose a story (from our list or their own)
 - Deconstruct the story
 - Rewrite it with the stuff they know as an ally or pitch a story
- Questions to consider:

What data is needed to better contextualize the inequalities of this topic?

What are the problems of the current coverage?

What obstacles do you face in the newsroom to active allyship?

What is the current story being told?

MEDIA REMIX - REPORT BACK

What data is needed to better contextualize the inequalities of this topic?

What are the problems of the current coverage?

What obstacles do you face in the newsroom to active allyship?

What is the current story being told?

AIM TO MISBEHAVE

@gaba
@blackamazon